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REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested. Claims 1-15 and 17-24 are currently pending and stand rejected. Applicant has amended claims 1-5, 7-8, 11-12, 14-15, 17, 19, and 21-24, has withdrawn claims 6, 9, 10, 13, 18, and 20, and has cancelled claim 16. No new matter has been added.

Formal issues

The Office Action objected to Figure 8 because of an informality. Applicant has amended Figure 8 and has attached one replacement sheet of formal drawings. Withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is therefore respectfully requested.

The Office Action also objected to the specification because of a minor informality. Applicant has amended the specification to correct the informality helpfully noted by the Examiner. Withdrawal of the objection to the specification is respectfully requested.

§ 112 rejection

Claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite. Applicant has corrected the informality helpfully noted by the Examiner. Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

§ 102 rejection

Claims 1-5, 8, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23 and 24 were rejected under 35. U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,649,726 to Rogers Jr. et al. ("Rogers"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

The Office Action stated that the motor 310 shown in Rogers "is powered in a single direction (conducive to the non-back drivable motor mentioned in column 9, lines 58-59, which would indicate one direction of movement) to provide for the differing output positions of the output member 372" (p. 4). Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Applicant respectfully notes that a non-back drivable motor is not the same as a motor that is powered in a single direction. As is known in the art, normal motor operation involves

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supplying power to a motor so that the motor causes other components to move. Back driving is a situation where manual movement of the components causes an unpowered motor to move. In other words, back driving involves moving the motor by actuating the component, not moving the component by actuating the motor. Thus, it is considered desirable to prevent back driving in a motor because any attempt to move the components manually would also require additional force to back drive the motor.

The non-back drivable motor in Rogers does not suggest the claimed "motor powered in a single direction" because the back driving characteristics of a motor are independent of the powering direction. In fact, Rogers teaches driving the motor 310 in two directions, not one; the motor 310 drives the gear wheel 318 to move in a counter-clockwise direction 316, thereby moving the locking lever a locked position, and a clockwise direction 314, thereby moving the locking lever to the unlocked position (Figure 8). As clearly shown in Figure 8, this bi-directional movement of the gear wheel 318 is possible only if the motor 310 rotates the worm gear 213 in two directions as well (see also col. 8, lines 45-56; col. 9, lines 28-49). Thus, the motor 310 in Rogers is clearly powered in two directions to provide different positions for the latch components.

Independent claims 1 and 24, on the other hand, recite a motor that is powered in a single direction to obtain the different output positions of the output member. As explained above, Rogers only shows a system having a motor that is powered in two different directions. Thus, Rogers does not disclose the claimed "motor powered in a single direction." Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

§ 103 rejection

Claim 22 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rogers. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Claim 22 depends on patentable claim 1 and is therefore also patentable for the reasons explained above. Because Rogers does not disclose an actuator with a motor powered in a single direction, Rogers also does not teach such an actuator having a centrifugal clutch. The Office Action therefore fails to establish a prima facie case of obviousness with respect to claim 22, and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

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All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. Applicant believes that no additional fees are necessary, however, the Commissioner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 50-1482 in the name of Carlson, Gaskey & Olds for any additional fees or credit the account for any overpayment.

Respectfully submitted,



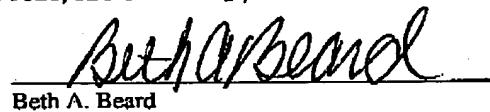
Anna M. Shih, Reg. No. 36,372
Carlson, Gaskey & Olds
400 W. Maple Road, Ste. 350
Birmingham, MI 48009
(248) 988-8360

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CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office, TC 3600, Before Final, (703) 872-9326, on November 18, 2003.


Beth A. Beard